

THURSTON COUNTY OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING – AUGUST 19, 2020



CHARISSA WATERS

ASSOCIATE PLANNER,
COMMUNITY PLANNING

CHARISSA.WATERS@THURSTON.WA.US



BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

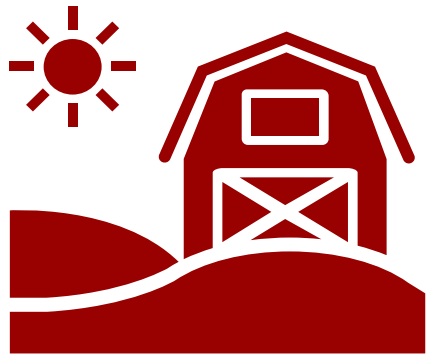


THE OPEN SPACE TAX PROGRAM PROVIDES AND INCENTIVE FOR LANDOWNERS TO KEEP THEIR LAND IN AN “OPEN SPACE” STATE.



ASSESSORS OFFICE AND THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOCC) BOTH HAVE OPEN SPACE PROGRAMS:

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW



Farm/agriculture open
space and forest land
Assessor Program



Timber land and open
space/open space
BoCC Program



Land no longer meeting the Assessors'
can apply for BoCC

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

BoCC is the legislative authority, as per RCW 84.34 to approve applications for their Open Space Program



Applies to various types of priority resources, including:

Farm and Agricultural conservation

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Private recreation areas

Urban Growth Area open space



Home sites and other non-resource areas are typically ineligible for open space classification

CRITERIA



Applicants must meet the criteria in RCW 84.34 and the Thurston County Open Space tax program guidelines.



A property tax reduction results from open space classification because the land is valued (for tax assessment purposes) on the basis of its current use and not its 'highest and best use'.



The percentage reduction of market value is based on the Public Benefit Rating System score.

PUBLIC BENEFIT RATING SYSTEM CRITERIA

Priority resources (such as farmland) are given a point value:

3 points for high priority
resources

2 points for medium priority
resources

1 point for low priority
resources and resource
enhancement

Points are also awarded for
public access and/or
historic/conservation easements



Removes a minimum of 1 acre from the classification for existing residential structures and uses

A contiguous area of 20 acres or more results in homesite allowance

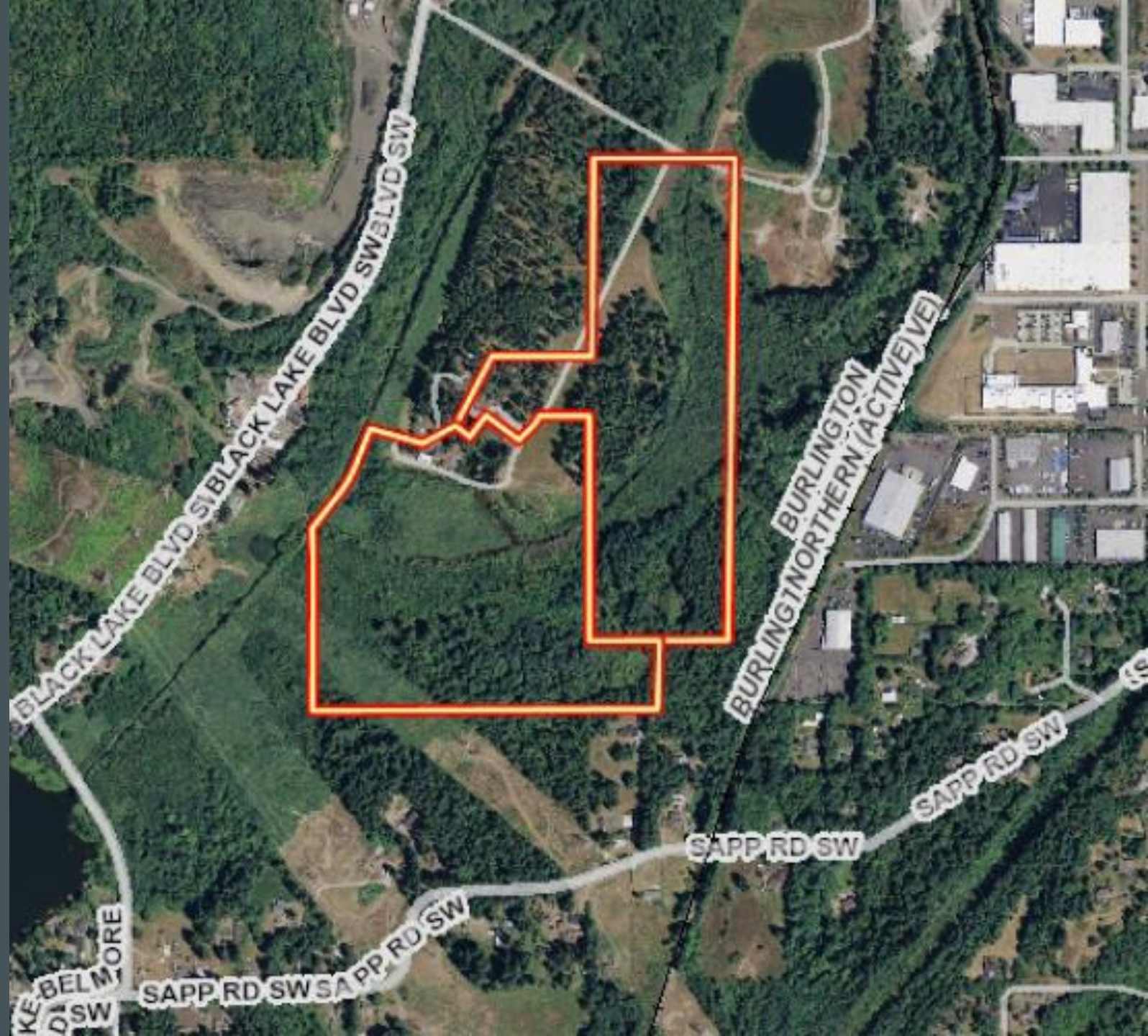
2020 PROCESS

- Four applications:
 - Boatright: Urban Growth Area open space and private recreation area with public access
 - Deguise: farm and agriculture from assessors program
 - VETs CAFÉ: Significant Wildlife Habitat and private recreation area with public access
 - Wagar farm and agriculture from assessors program

BOATRIGHT

The parcels under consideration total 85 ac.

- 45 acres proposed for the Open Space program



BOATRIGHT APPLICATION

- Applying for a classification of Urban Growth Area Open Space and Private Recreation Area with substantial public access
- 36 acres of this property are currently enrolled in the Assessor's Designated Forest Land Open Space category, and will be reclassified through this application
- The parcels are within the city limits of Tumwater in the Percival Creek Corridor watershed and Percival Canyon special management area. The creek corridor is rich in natural resources and recreational opportunities





BOATRIGHT CRITERIA ANALYSIS

- The proposed 45 acres are eligible for 8 points under the Thurston County Public Benefit Rating System, qualifying the enrolled land for a 70 percent reduction in market value
- The proposed area meets the eligibility requirements for Urban Growth Area Open Space & Private Recreation Area
 - The proposed private recreation area includes the maintenance of a trail system throughout the forested areas surrounding the wetlands and streams and access to the property for recreational purposes
 - The applicants are proposing substantial access, which means that it will be available on a year-round basis and be available to the public upon special arrangements



BOATRIGHT OPEN SPACE PUBLIC ACCESS



BOATRIGHT STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- The property is a rare open space area within the city limits of Tumwater
- This area could provide valuable natural resource conservation and urban area open space recreational opportunities for the public
- Staff recommends approval of the classification 45 acres qualifying at a 70 percent reduction owned by Anna and Tom Boatright as open-space land for current use assessment

DEGUISE

The parcel under consideration totals 8.34 acres with a one acre homesite



DEGUISE APPLICATION



- Applying for classification Farm and Agriculture
- This property was previously in the Open Space-Agricultural tax program administered by the Assessor's office
- Zoning of this parcel is Rural 1 unit per 20 acres (R 1/20).
 - The surrounding parcels are also zoned R 1/20 and Rural Residential Resource (RRR 1/5)

DEGUISE CRITERIA ANALYSIS

- The proposed 7.34 acres are eligible for 3 points under the Thurston County Public Benefit Rating System, qualifying the enrolled land for a 50 percent reduction in market value
- The proposed area meets the eligibility requirements for the Farm and Agricultural Conservation Open Space program
 - As per RCW 84.34.020(8)(a): Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land is “Land that was previously classified as "farm and agricultural land", but no longer meets the criteria for continued classification, and for which the owner(s) has applied for reclassification as Farm and Agriculture Conservation Land after receiving notification by the County Assessor that the land will be removed from agriculture classification for that reason.”



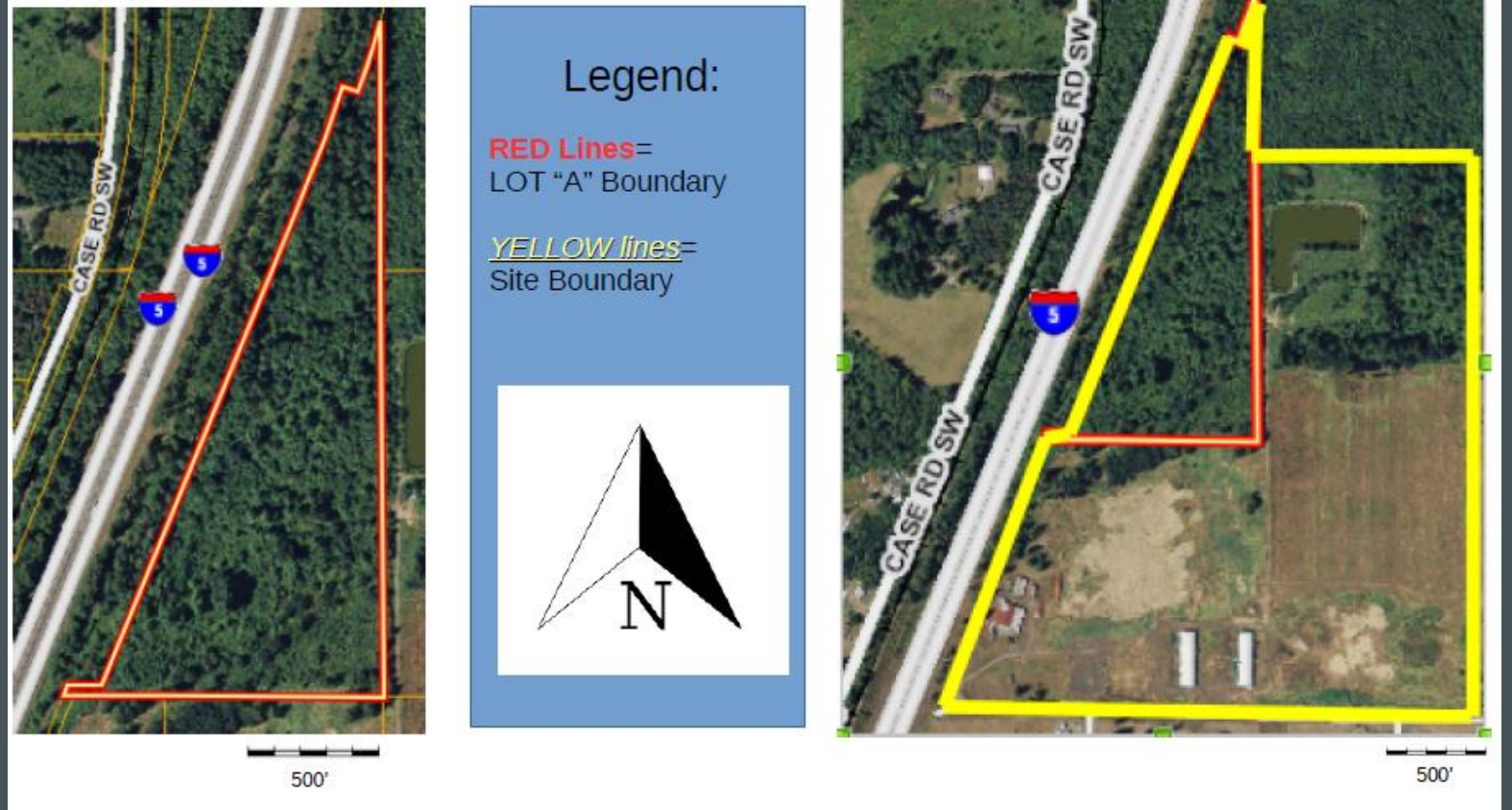
DEGUISE STAFF RECOMMENDATION



- Staff recommends approval of classification of the 7.34 acres owned by Burdell Deguise as open-space land for current use assessment
- The continued classification of this land as open space and the subsequent tax relief to the landowner is consistent with the county's strategic initiative number 7; to balance development with the preservation of the County's rural character, natural areas, and open spaces

VETS CAFE

21.96 acres proposed for the open space—open space tax program



VETS CAFÉ APPLICATION



- Applying for a classification of Private Recreation Area and Significant Wildlife habitat with substantial public access
- Zoning of this parcel is Rural Residential Resource 1 unit per 5 acres (RRR 1/5) and adjacent parcels are zoned Rural 1 unit per 20 acres (R 1/20)
- The parcel is within the Chehalis River watershed and the Scatter Creek basin
- Northwest portion of 7 adjoining parcels totaling 121.96-acres which are owned by the Veterans' Ecological Trades Collective

VETS CAFÉ CRITERIA ANALYSIS



- The majority of the parcel is comprised of Category I forested wetlands fringed and interpolated by Oregon White Oak
- The parcel provides habitat for a number of Thurston County priority species and state sensitive, candidate and endangered species
- The applicant is proposing the entire property be included in open space classification because the “buffer” areas surrounding the Category I wetlands and Oregon white oak habitat areas also provide significant wildlife habitat for important species and recreational opportunities for the public



VETS CAFÉ RESOURCES

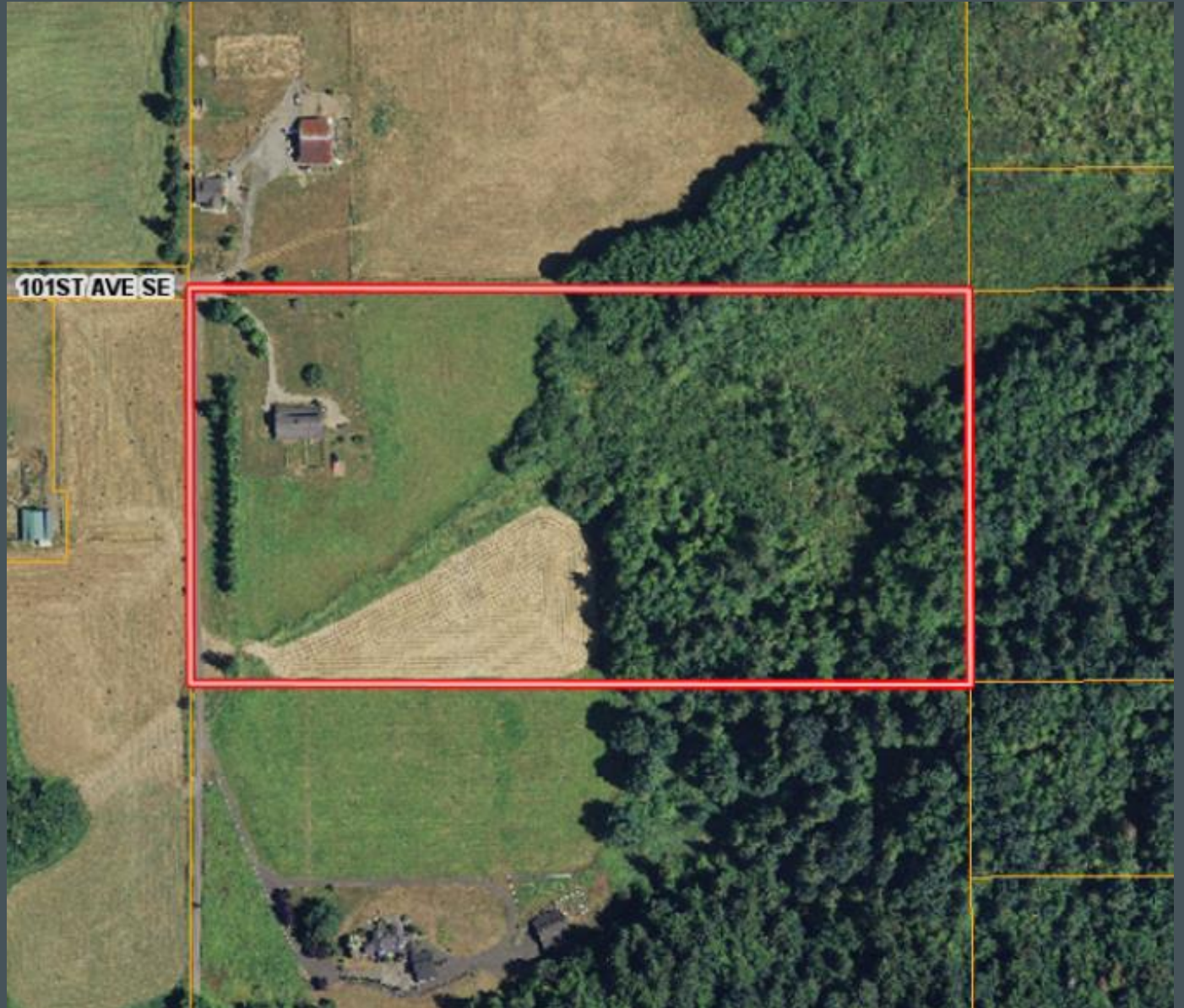
VETS CAFE STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Staff recommends approval of the classification of 21.96 acres qualifying at a 70% reduction owned by VETS Cafe as open-space land for current use assessment



WAGAR

The parcel under consideration totals 20.57 acres with a one acre homesite



WAGAR APPLICATION



- Applying for classification Farm and Agriculture
- This property was previously in the Open Space-Agricultural tax program administered by the Assessor's office
- The zoning of this parcel is Rural 1 unit per 10 acres (R 1/10). The surrounding parcels are also zoned R 1/10

WAGAR CRITERIA ANALYSIS

- The property is eligible for 3 points under the Thurston County Public Benefit Rating System, qualifying the enrolled land for a 50% reduction
- The proposed area meets the eligibility requirements for the Farm and Agricultural Conservation Open Space program
 - As per RCW 84.34.020(8)(a): Farm and Agricultural Conservation Land is “Land that was previously classified as “farm and agricultural land”, but no longer meets the criteria for continued classification, and for which the owner(s) has applied for reclassification as Farm and Agriculture Conservation Land after receiving notification by the County Assessor that the land will be removed from agriculture classification for that reason.”



WAGAR STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- The continued classification of this land as open space and the subsequent tax relief to the landowner is consistent with the county's strategic initiative number 7; to balance development with the preservation of the County's rural character, natural areas, and open spaces
- Staff recommends approval of the classification of 19.57 acres owned by Michael Wagar as open-space land for current use assessment



QUESTIONS

- Open Space Staff Contact:
Charissa Waters
charissa.waters@co.thurston.wa.us